

EXHIBIT AN

DEI tug-of-war in Wake County Schools stirs tensions among board, parents

Amid new Trump-era policies abandoning Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives, the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) has chosen not to dismantle its own Office of Equity Affairs, prompting some North Carolinians to warn of potential funding cuts that could impact the district.

Tuesday night's WCPSS board meeting revealed deepening divisions over DEI policies, with heated exchanges between supporters and critics. Seven of the nine board members are Democrats who have allowed the district's DEI policies to remain intact. Proponents point to protections for marginalized students, while opponents point to the division and harm created by the policies.

Board member Lynn Edmonds argued that Trump's rapid series of executive orders aim to destroy democracy while making people feel hopeless. She questioned who is so threatened by DEI policies while disputing public assertions that DEI threatens students and federal funding.

"Who exactly is so threatened by the pillars and value of DEI, or so threatened by pronouns, that they would deny special needs students with the funding they need and deny children school meals?" Edmonds asked. "Own it. Own that short-sightedness and own that cruelty."

Libs of TikTok
@libsoftiktok · Follow



Woke @WCPSS board member Lynn Edmonds went on a rant against Trump at a board meeting after a parent called out the district's DEI policies.

Video clips of board members advocating for DEI went viral online, with Elon Musk reacting to comments made by board member Sam Hershey last week. He stated that "mediocre white men" have been hired based on their skin color for the last 250 years.

Eric Shephard SD 480p



Shephard, a former Title 1 school teacher and veteran, spoke to the board during this week's meeting, pointing out plummeting public confidence in public schools.

Hershey apologized for coming across in a demeaning way.

"I want Eric Shephard to know that I took his words to heart, and I want to personally apologize to him," Hershey said on Tuesday. "I could have made the same points two weeks ago by being more nuanced and without coming across as demeaning to anyone. Mr. Shephard and to those who feel I demeaned their own life, I am sorry."

While some suggest DEI implies inclusivity for disabled individuals and others in need of accommodations, board member Cheryl Caulfield voiced concerns over the ideological implications of DEI. She said a second-grade class was assigned to act out a play where the students held roles that pushed “they/them” pronouns on students in what is socially influencing students.

“And at the end of the play, the actor is relieved that they finally chose their words of the day: ‘They/then.’ That is social influence,” said Caulfield. “Let me repeat that this is second grade. Not learning the basics of 123s and ABCs and how to write and read words.”

Keung Hui · Feb 18



@nckhui · [Follow](#)

Wake County school board member Cheryl Caulfield asks board to comply w/ Feb. 28 federal order to end DEI programming. She says Sam

Some parents also expressed concerns that DEI lowers academic standards and prioritizes race over merit. They called for the dismantling of the WCPSS Office of Equity Affairs, arguing that DEI is divisive and undermines the achievements of individuals from all backgrounds.

Jessica Lewis, vice chair of Moms for Liberty, attended President Trump’s executive order signing of the “No Males in Female Sports” policy. She questioned why WCPSS has not yet implemented Title IX changes following the order.

“This means the Office of Equity Affairs needs to be dismantled along with any DEI programs,” said Lewis. “February 28 is the deadline to say goodbye to DEI. It will be in the best interest of this school district to comply. If compliance is not met, Moms for Liberty is prepared to escalate this issue, potentially leading to the loss of federal funding for the school district.”

READ THE FULL STORY HERE (<https://www.carolinajournal.com/dei-tug-of-war-in-wake-county-schools-stirs-tensions-among-board-parents/>)

Group(s): Moms for Liberty [Print \(/news/print-view/dei-tugofwar-in-wake-county-schools-stirs-tensions-among-board-parents/\)](/news/print-view/dei-tugofwar-in-wake-county-schools-stirs-tensions-among-board-parents/)

Source: The Carolina Journal ([/news/?q=source:The Carolina Journal](/news/?q=source:The%20Carolina%20Journal))

Released: February 20th, 2025 12:01 AM

Author: Brianna Kramer

Website: <https://www.carolinajournal.com/dei-tug-of-war-in-wake-county-schools-stirs-tensions-among-board-parents/>
(<https://www.carolinajournal.com/dei-tug-of-war-in-wake-county-schools-stirs-tensions-among-board-parents/>)

Tag(s): [NATIONAL \(/news/?q=tag:national\)](/news/?q=tag:national)

Subscribe for Moms for Liberty News, Updates, and Events

JOIN OUR MAILING LIST (/FORMS/GET-UPDATES)

Moms for Liberty is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization.

Moms for Liberty is dedicated to fighting for the survival of America by unifying, educating and empowering parents to defend their parental rights at all levels of government.

[.\(https://www.facebook.com/Moms4Liberty/\)](https://www.facebook.com/Moms4Liberty/) [.\(https://twitter.com/Moms4Liberty/\)](https://twitter.com/Moms4Liberty/)

[.\(https://www.instagram.com/moms4liberty/\)](https://www.instagram.com/moms4liberty/)

[.\(https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2H19eKURyI364Q3Rv-o_5g\)](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2H19eKURyI364Q3Rv-o_5g)

[Privacy Policy \(/privacy-policy/\)](/privacy-policy/) / [Terms of Use \(/terms-of-use/\)](/terms-of-use/) / [Contact Us \(/contact-us/\)](/contact-us/) / [Chapter Chair Log In \(/committees/chapter-chairs/\)](/committees/chapter-chairs/)

Phone: 321.345.1671 | Email: info@momsforliberty.org (<mailto:info@momsforliberty.org>) |

Media: media@momsforliberty.org (<mailto:media@momsforliberty.org>)

Copyright © 2023